

Washington, D.C. - Rep. Brad Miller (NC-13) met today with former Mecklenburg County Sheriff Jim Pendergraph to discuss common ground in Immigration Reform and Enforcement. The former Charlotte-area sheriff was recently appointed the National Executive Director of State and Local Coordination for Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Pendergraph spearheaded the Immigration and Nationality Act Section 287(g) program in North Carolina will soon become a pilot program for states, nationwide. It involves extensive federal training for local law enforcement to become certified as immigration officials, allowing them to utilize the ICE fingerprinting system and high-tech ICE databases to track, identify and when necessary, deport criminals in the country illegally. "There is obviously a difference between real criminals and law-abiding immigrants struggling to support their families," said

Rep. Miller

. "Repeat offender criminals should expect to have their immigration status questioned when they are charged."

According to ICE, more than 600,000 real felons- fugitive criminal aliens who were ordered deported and disappeared - are currently wanted in the U.S.

Miller

voted to increase funding for the 287 (g) program by \$9 million in the FY08 Homeland Security Appropriations Act.

Pendergraph's focus in North Carolina was on criminals who had already been deported after committing crimes and returned to the United States. Additionally, he targeted illegal immigrants in jail who had been convicted of serious crimes in other states.